

to lead on the environmental issues but also helps us on the economic front. Clean energy will mean new jobs, good jobs in America. We developed the technology for alternative and renewable energy sources. Let's keep the jobs in America. These are good jobs. This bill means more jobs in America by investing in technology that other countries are now investing more in than America. They understand the future is going to be in wind power and solar power and, yes, in nuclear power. This bill allows us to move forward so we can keep jobs in America.

Lastly, I think everyone will agree that from a strategic point, we need to use less energy and produce more in America. The bill Senator KERRY has brought forward will help us achieve those goals.

I look forward to debating global climate change and energy policy. I hope we can come together for the sake of the Nation, for the sake of the future, and develop an energy policy that not only will keep us safe, will not only help our economy, but will be responsible on international environmental issues and be an international leader.

UNEMPLOYMENT EXTENSION

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, shortly we will be voting on a cloture motion on the motion to proceed to the unemployment compensation issue. Senator DURBIN addressed this issue a few minutes ago. I want to underscore how important it is for us to move forward.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit one of our employment offices in Maryland. We have a one-stop location where people looking for work can come and get the services of not only governmental agencies but nonprofit organizations to help them find employment. I have been to these offices in the past in Maryland. I have had a chance to talk to people who are seeking employment.

When I walked into that office yesterday, I was shocked to see how many people were there. It was hard to get through the door. People were coming in desperate to try to find jobs because there are no jobs out there for them to find. They are desperate to be employed, not only for the sake of having income but for the dignity that comes with employment. We have a problem out there. I think we all understand that.

I will give you two people with whom I talked yesterday: Bernice from Anne Arundel County, a resident who worked for a mortgage company until it went out of business, she has been unemployed since September 2008. She is about ready to lose her UI benefits. She talked about how difficult it was for her to talk about this, how difficult it was for her to tell her story. All she wants is a job. She wants the dignity and income of a job.

Charlene from Baltimore talked about being employed by Business Manager for Watermark Media. She

lost her job in September 2008 when the company went out of business. She is a very qualified individual. Yet she cannot find employment. Her UI ran out on October 25. Her husband is expected to lose his job this week, and it is possible she will lose her family home.

That is what we are talking about, people in our communities who are unemployed and cannot find employment. We now know there is about 1.9 million Americans who will run out of unemployment benefits by the end of this year unless we act, unless we take action. That includes about 25,000 Marylanders who will find themselves without any benefits. Currently, there are over 15 million Americans who are unemployed and over 200,000 Marylanders who can't find jobs. We need to act. We need to act on behalf of Bernice and Charlene and the literally hundreds of thousands of Americans who shortly will be running out of their unemployment benefits.

The bill before us is an extension of an additional 14 weeks of benefits for every State in the country. The original bill that came over from the House had a trigger mechanism of 8.5 percent unemployment. I brought this chart to show my colleagues why it is important to extend benefits in every State in this Nation. I think Maryland is a typical State.

Our unemployment numbers may be a little bit lower than the national average. We are in the 7 percent unemployment rate. But look at the orange counties in my State of Maryland: Cecil County, 8.6 percent unemployment; Caroline County, 8.8 percent unemployment; Dorchester County, 10.9 percent unemployment; Somerset County, 9.5 percent; Washington County, one of the growth counties not far from here, 9.4 percent unemployment—some of those people commute to Washington to work—and then Baltimore City, the center of our State, 10.6 percent unemployment.

I thank the leadership for bringing forward an unemployment compensation proposal to extend benefits that apply to every State because we need it in Maryland. I could talk about minority unemployment and the fact that the African-American unemployment rate in this country is around 15 percent. The Latino unemployment rate is around 12 percent. There are pockets of unemployment in all of our States that are at extraordinarily high numbers, and that is why we need to extend the unemployment benefits.

Let me also point out that these are not benefits that aren't paid for. These are insurance benefits. They are paid for by the current workforce. They pay into a fund so we have money available in a recession to help those who lose their jobs and can't find employment. That is why it is called unemployment insurance benefits. It is there for this circumstance.

Is there anyone here who denies that we are not in a tough time if you are looking for a job? We all know that. So

now is the time to extend unemployment benefits so people have income in order to be able to literally survive until our economy can rebound.

Let me also point out, I know there are a lot of us who are always looking for bills on which to put amendments. I understand the frustration of some of my colleagues. Here is a bill, it is a tax bill, let's put a provision on it. Quite frankly, I have a few provisions I would like to see enacted into law. This is not the right bill to do it on. If we put amendments on this bill and let it go back to the House with issues that are unrelated to unemployment compensation, it could take a long time to reconcile those differences.

We already have some differences with the House with regard to the States that qualify. Let's reconcile that quickly so that individuals such as Charlene, who currently are losing their benefits, know soon that they are going to be able to continue to get these unemployment benefits. It is important that we act quickly to get the job done.

One last point for my colleagues. This is important. It is the right thing to do. It is what government is here for—to help people who are literally out of luck because of no fault of their own but the economy. It is what we are supposed to do as far as the right type of social programs to protect people during tough economic times. But there is a tradeoff that helps our economy. This money goes directly back into our economy. Every dollar we pay out in unemployment insurance benefits will come back and have a multiplier effect of more money than we give in benefits in helping our economy grow. So this is the right remedy to help our economy. It is the right thing to do for the 1.9 million Americans who otherwise would lose their benefits by the end of the year.

We have a chance in just a few minutes to move this bill forward so it can be reconciled with the House quickly, and then we can assure the people of our community that, indeed, we responded and provided the appropriate type of relief for those who cannot find employment today.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

AFGHANISTAN TROOP REQUEST

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I believe it is now time for President Obama to move forward with General McChrystal's plan for executing the war in Afghanistan and to fully support his troop request.

The President has correctly called Afghanistan a "war of necessity." The counterinsurgency strategy that he announced last March is a good one, and it has been widely accepted. Having read General McChrystal's August report, I believe it may represent our only chance to successfully implement